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A comparison of the municipal reform organizations of Boston, New York and Chicago

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A COMPARISON OF THE MUNICIPAL REFORM ORGANIZATIONS
OF BOSTON, NEW YORK AND CHICAGO.

A Thesis for Master's Degree.

Philip A. Goold.
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A COMPARISON OF MUNICIPAL REFORM ORGANIZATIONS
IN BOSTON, NEW YORK AND CHICAGO.

Municipal government in the United States would be a joke, if it were not a crime. The spectacle of a man sitting quietly by, while a thief goes thru his home in broad day-light and rifles it of an armful of valuable loot, would strike us as absurd. If this should be repeated frequently, without any vigorous resistance on the owner's part, we should probably lose all patience with him and believe that he deserved his fate. The perennial spectacle of the American citizen and tax-payer sitting idly by, while the ring of municipal "grafters" so administers his local affairs that they steal large amounts from him, and give him scanty returns, is quite as ridiculous. It is more, it is criminal; for not only is he training a new class of law-breakers, and educating himself and his fellows into the belief that this is the natural state of things, not to be bothered about, unless one cares to go into the political game for what there is in it, but he is leaving this as a terrible inheritance to future generations of Americans and with it the burden of accumulated debts, resultant upon his negligence. Since the voter, and the non-voting citizen, can stop the misgovernment, they are nearly as much to blame
as "the grafters".

But why do we allow it? Why doesn't someone arouse the drowsy householder and spur him on to protect his property? Why doesn't some onlooker help to catch the thief and haul him to the prison? That is what bodies of citizens are trying to do now, and there is real interest in the story of their efforts to awaken the somnolent voter to his danger and his task, which is to drive out or shut up the municipal bandit. To the end of making municipal government honest and efficient, reform movements have been inaugurated in all our large cities, taking many forms and achieving varying degrees of success.

The purpose of this paper is to take up the work of such organizations in Boston, New York and Chicago, during a period approximately covered by the last two decades, considering their objects, methods of work and history, and comparing them in order to find if possible the most efficient method brought into play, and the factors in its success.

Obstacles to any satisfactory comparison of organizations and methods are found in the great diversity of problems to be solved, by these reform forces, as they work in the various cities, and the consequent differences in the kinds of activity required of them.

Boston, as the smallest of the three cities, and the
one in which corruption and inefficient administration has been least dangerous, we consider first.

It is full of foreigners, like most of our large cities and particularly of immigrants from Ireland and their descendants, who, whatever their other excellencies, have not made a very high-minded electorate, nor become unselfish public servants as a rule, tho there are many praiseworthy exceptions. For more than a quarter of a century officials from this, and other similar classes, guilty of the same faults, have been very powerful in city affairs. Misgovernment has been the result, and misgovernment in an ascending ratio.

A few figures and statistics show how true this is.

In 1878 the population of Boston was 355,000
In 1888 " " " " 415,000

showing an increase of 17%.

In 1876 the total expenditure per year amounted to $12,505,748.91
" 1888 " " " " " amounted to $17,467,053.27

An increase of 39%.

In 1885 the city debt was $42,962,180.
" 1890 it had increased to $55,440,361.

When we turn to a later period in the city's history, we find conditions no better. From 1898 to 1910 the population of the city increased twenty-two per cent; the
city debt increased one hundred and seventy per cent, which is an increase of one hundred and twenty per cent per capita. The tax rate rose from $12.60 to $16.50. This means that the city's debt has been growing seven and one half times as fast as the population and four and one half times as fast as the valuation; or to state it again in a different way, we have spent $25,000,000.00 with nothing to show for it in improvements. Petty "graft" was more common that the audacious "hoodlum" exposed in some other municipal governments, but this was so prevalent that the tax payers were each year increasing their contributions to the corrupt politicians and receiving less from them, in upkeep and improvements of public utilities.

Where did the money go to? The report of the Finance Commission shows some of the leaks; two men were kept on a dump a week after work had ceased. One man had nine lanterns to fill each day. Another had to hang some rubber boots up to dry. A janitor drew pay for seven weeks spent in Europe. Filing cases were bought at $4 for which the market-price was $1.60. Sand was bought from aldermen for city uses at one hundred percent profit--for the alderman. One man was on the pay-rolls as a tea warmer. More serious "graft" and misuse of power was also frequent. Patronage was employed to build up the party machine or even a personal following, by those who were receiving the highest
salaries to serve the people. Civil service laws were evaded. One city official took an examination for a friend, to get him a position for which he could not qualify. In 1907 the Finance Committee estimated that in five departments alone the awarding of contracts and purchasing of supplies, without legally required competition, had cost the city $1,800,000. In several cases aldermen had been granted these contracts, receiving them under some company name.

In Boston, justly proud of her culture and her educational institutions, we should expect to find the public school system well nigh perfect. Such was not the case; however, for by the year 1897, the schools had slipped so far down into the mire of corrupt politics that grafting politicians were mismanaging the whole system. At that time, and even until 1906, the School Board was made up of twenty-four members elected at large for three year terms, eight being chosen each year. Before this large Board there came for decision many matters concerned not alone with the running of the schools, but with the buying of schoolhouse sites and the erection of the buildings as well. This meant "graft". Matters had come to such a pass that any one who sought or even accepted a nomination for the Board was called a politician, and expected to adopt corrupt methods to enrich himself, during his term of office. This
was not all. The large committee of twenty four was divided up into sub-committees and called "committees in charge", each with some section of the city placed largely under its supervision, for until 1897 the Superintendent of schools had very little administrative power, and few executive duties. The obvious result of the "Committees in Charge" system was a tendency to provincialism and a lack of unity in the schools. Different methods of teaching, even different books were used in various sections of the city. These sub-committees also had more voice than was wise in the hiring of teachers for the schools in their districts, a thing which limited the best efforts of the Superintendent. Superintendent Lowell succeeded in working some slight changes and reforms, but retired in 1897, before he had firmly established them.

A large number of organizations have been formed for the purpose of giving Boston good government and a school system free from political manipulation. In the case of most of these we can give only a passing reference to their history and work, but the Public School Association, the Good Government Association, and the Citizens' Municipal League will repay a more careful study.

The Citizens' Association of Boston

In December of 1887 a number of public spirited men came to realize how poorly the city was being
governed. Calling together a number of other citizens and tax-payers, of various parties, they organized the Citizens' Association of Boston. Its Constitution thus states the object for which it was formed: "The purpose of the Association shall be to promote and honest, efficient and economical administration of municipal and county affairs, by inducing the citizens and tax-payers to take a more active and intelligent interest in such affairs, by furnishing an accurate and non-partisan account of the manner in which the city is governed, and of the conduct of the public servants, by encouraging faithful and exposing unfaithful performance of official duties, and by advocating legislation necessary or proper for securing its purpose." How familiar that sounds now! Every such body has had practically the same purpose.

The association grew in its membership and tried very earnestly to live up to its object. Each year its published reports told of committee activity in connection with legislation, suggested, or opposed, the investigation of petty "graft" in the Council, city-finance, and such special matters as city-lighting, the revision of the building laws, and the sub-ways. The activity of the association was a helpful factor in the city, as long as it carried on its work, but about 1897 it became dormant.
The Twentieth Century Club

In 1893 twelve men invited a number of others to meet with them and form the Twentieth Century Club, which they planned to make an organization "including men in the various fields of literature, art, politics and business, animated by a common progressive spirit and interested alike in the creation of a better society"— as a "a distinct addition to the intellectual and moral life of our city." In brief it was "to promote a finer public spirit and a better social order." The club was organized, and into its membership came men and women, interested in its aim and activity.

At weekly luncheons and bimonthly meetings noted speakers addressed the Club on themes connected with social and intellectual progress and betterment. How wide was the range of the interests and the activity of the members is shown by the list of the committees, which were appointed: House, Lectures, Library, Social Science, Art, Education, Municipal Reform, Council, Membership, Finance, International Relations, Printing, Tenement House, Sanitary Conditions, Labor, Biblical Lectures, and Agricultural Education. Some very effective work was done in connection with the Tenement House problem, particularly from 1898 to 1901, when the committee, having that phase of city life in charge, investigated, at first hand, conditions in the
slum sections of Boston, reported them to the city authorities and continued to agitate the matter until steps were taken to improve or condemn tenements unfit for occupation.

Legislative work was attempted; investigation and criticism of the conduct of city business was carried on, many meetings and banquets were held and much talking on municipal reform was indulged in. Yet most of this was more academic than practical. Neither the politician nor the man of the street has been strongly influenced by these discussions and findings. Along lines of social and educational betterment the club has done fine work and is still doing it, but it has not been among the most important forces in the city for driving out "graft" and replacing it by good government.

The Reform Club  Two other clubs of later origin

The Economic Club  may well be mentioned here, since they have been more academic than otherwise, in purpose and work. They are The Massachusetts Reform Club, and The Economic Club of Boston. The Reform Club started as the Tarriff Reform Club, held meetings and banquets, at which subjects connected with the tarriff were discussed. It still exists as a dining club, its activities limited to hold these dinners and hearing discussed these themes of general economic interest, for the tarriff bias of the club has been lost sight of. The Economic Club was organized in October 1902 with nearly two hundred members.
Its object has been to bring together into a neutral arena speakers of differing opinions upon important economic questions, to give the members of the Club the opportunity of hearing various positions on the same subject ably defended. Governors and college presidents, statesmen and noted lawyers, railroad officials and labor leaders have taken part in these discussions. The Club still continues to hold its banquets, and now has a membership of about one thousand. As "an open court" for the exchange of opinion, a dining club of men who want to hear what others think, it is a real success, but of course it is no factor in practical municipal politics.

The Boston City Club has done little in the way of actual campaigning or search into the administration of the city, yet it has been a real force for progress and uplift. It was founded in May 1905 by 300 men interested in having a great club, the policy of which would be "absolutely non-partisan, broadly representative of the whole city, including labor men as well as capitalists, professional men as well as business men."...so that...."these men could be brot together on a common ground that would enable them to work for the betterment and development of the City of Boston." Its progress at first was slow, but after a club house on Beacon St. had been purchased and
fitted up, it appeared more stable and began to attract
the attention of men all about the city. It has been most
effective as a great "get together" organization, where men
of all classes have mingled on equal terms, and since its
aim is the betterment and development of the city it has
always had a "reform bias". There were six hundred members
in December of 1906, there were 3,121 in 1909.

Several times a month the members of the club hear
addresses on themes of economic, governmental or general
interest. Many of the speakers have discussed questions
bearing directly upon municipal reform. The Club has a
planned Civic Secretary, hard at work, and its committees have to
get into more active work for good government next year.
Up to the present it has helped the cause more by the gen-
eral influence of banding together such men as compose its
membership, than any particular work it has done.

The Public Franchise League. One of the most interesting of
Boston's self-constituted "watch-
dog societies" is The Public
Franchise League. Even before this was formed there had
been a number of men in the city, interested in seeing that
the community got its rights from the corporations and vice
versa, but in 1900 these men organized themselves into The
Public Franchise League. They have neither constitution
nor elaborate machinery; just an office and a secretary.
There is little trumpet blowing done in connection with their work, but time after time they have protected the people's interests, by ringing the alarm bell when some important concession was unwittingly being made by legislature or council.

In 1899 it was these men, not yet organized as the League, who led the opposition to the return of the surface tracks to Tremont St., when the legislature, the papers and the politicians had all yielded to the West End Company's request. How effective this opposition was is shown by the referendum vote on the question, 51,585 against, 26,354 for. In 1900 they led the fight for the city ownership of the Washington St. tunnel, which will yield in the future a regular annual income of thousands of dollars to the city. Among other matters, in which the League has been active, have been the "Sliding Gas-Scale Bill" in 1906, and the electric light rates investigation and consequent reduction. In a few cases it has joined with the corporations, when the demands of the public have been short-sighted or unfair. This was a very important work well done.

The United Improvement Association

Joined with this League, in the fight to keep the electric tracks off Tremont St., in 1899, was a group of local improvement.
together

associations, united in no way but drawn for a common work, by a common need. When the struggle was won they fell apart again, to join forces only when there arose questions of such importance as to involve the welfare of the whole city. In 1907 they united in the appointment of Mr. Geo. Earnst as their representative on the Finance Commission. It was not until 1909 that these associations perfected any federation. In that year fifteen societies were organized into the United Improvement Association. Since then another has been added. Their purpose, as stated in their Constitution, is "to advance the civic interests of the City of Boston, it being expressly understood that under no circumstances shall the policy of the association be of a partisan political nature." Its membership is made up of three delegates from each of its constituent bodies. Some of the things done by the executive committee of seven, appointed by the president, have been improvements advocated, and in some cases gained, in connection with the schools, school-houses, expenditures of the Parkman Fund, and removal of rubbish. The association has great opportunities for work in its own field, where there is no competition.

The Public School Association

But while these other organizations were at work on their problems, the school system was attracting considerable attention. An association
of women had existed, before 1897, to interest other women in voting for honest and efficient candidates for the School Board, but it had accomplished little. In that year a new, and broader organization sprang up, which soon after became the Public School Association. Its objects were:

First, - To continue the reform inaugurated by Superintendent Lowell, whose term of office expired that year. Second, - To drive out "grafters" and incompetents from the membership of the Board. The association was non-partisan and non-sectarian.

In its first campaign, in 1898, it was ridiculed by all the political parties. Lowell whom it had nominated for Superintendent was defeated, as were all its candidates for the Board but one. Superintendent Seaver, who was elected that year, proved to be a man of decision and considerable ability, standing for the right when that brought him into conflict with the Committees in charge, a fact which cost him re-election in 1904. In its second campaign, in 1899, the Public School Association elected four of its candidates, while in 1900 it elected five. This gave it ten members of the Board, but the majority was corrupt.

In 1901 the Association elected seven, giving it sixteen members, i.e. two thirds of the Board, the following year. For two years it held its majority, tho this was reduced in 1902. In 1903 the reform majority was wiped out. The
Superintendent's power was greatly weakened, the following year, by partisan control and authority.

Meanwhile, however, appeal had been made to the legislature, which had taken the control of the erection of school-houses, away from the School Board and given it to a board of three commissioners, appointed by the Mayor. The reform majority had also introduced beneficial changes, in the handling of School affairs in the Board. The power to veto the Superintendent's proposed action was taken from the committees in charge. The best teachers available were procured, regardless of whether their homes were in Boston or out of town, and greater economy marked the administration of the schools. In 1805 the legislature passed a bill cutting down the number of the School Board from twenty four members to five members, to be elected at large, for terms of three years. James J. Storrow, a candidate of the Public School Association, was the first chairman of the smaller board. Improvement in the personnel was immediate and a better administration of the schools' business has resulted ever since. The association has been very active at every election in which a member of the Board is to be chosen, and has, with few exceptions, been successful in gaining the election of the good men whom it has nominated. It still exists; it is still at work; its two candidates were elected at the last municipal election.
The Public Information League

By 1902 practical men, interested in seeing the city better-governed, had grown impatient of relying upon the published wisdom of a group of thinkers assembled for academic discussion, as a method of reform. One result of this impatience was the Public Information League, formed about 1902. The object of the League was to present to the voters information concerning the candidates for public office. It was made up largely of young men, many of them students and lawyers, whose practice was not yet very exacting. These volunteers tried to look up and publish the records of men anxious to enter the City Council or Board of Aldermen.

The Good Government Association

Men of experience felt that an organization representative of the great business and professional interests of the city was needed, to receive the loyal and hearty support of the voters at large. This general sentiment crystallized into action, in the spring of 1903, in a meeting of representatives from the following organizations: The Chamber of Commerce, The Associated Board of Trade, The Merchants Association, the Bar Association, the Real Estate Exchange, the Fruit and Produce Exchange, and the New England Shoe and Leather Association. As a result of this meeting the Good Govern-
ment Association was formed and an executive committee was
elected, consisting of seven members, one from each of these
bodies. In the fall of the same year the Public Information
League merged itself with the Association. Its objects, as
stated by this committee, were, "First, to arouse in the
citizens of Boston a sense of political duty; and second,
to aid the voters in a practical way to secure the election
of aggressively honest and capable men."

Work began at once for the fall campaign, being wholly
confined, that year, to the candidates for the City Council
and Board of Aldermen. Most of the two hundred aspirants
for office were personally interviewed, their records were
carefully investigated and the most important facts thus
brought out were published and sent to each voter. The Association recommended nine candidates for the Board of Aldermen, five of whom were elected. No recommendations were
made in the case of those who were running for the Council.

Practically the same course was pursued the next year,
1904, tho there was less condemnation of candidates who
were not recommended, little being stated about them except
their record. Commendation was given the men who were
being recommended for Aldermen, six of whom were elected.
In 1905 only seven were recommended, four republicans and
three democrats, all of whom were elected. That same year
the Association recommended candidates for Mayor and Street
Commissioner, both of whom were defeated, the former by Fitzgerald. In 1906, however, owing to its disappointment at the lack of ability in some of the men it had elected the previous year, the Association recommended only four candidates, all of whom were elected. In 1907 one of these was repudiated and seven others were recommended, six of them republicans and one a democrat. Candidates favored by the Good Government Association were elected that year for Mayor and Street Commissioner, tho it must be admitted that its recommendation of Geo. A. Hibbard consisted more in a condemnation of his opponents than in any very hearty praise given him.

The Finance Commission, which was at work even before this time, should be mentioned here because of the important part it has played in City affairs. In 1907, when Mayor Fitzgerald had been in office about a year, the friends of good government became so aroused at a number of what they considered the administration's suspicious financial transactions, that several bills were prepared for the legislature, by his political opponents, asking that a Finance Commission be appointed to investigate the city's money matters. The Mayor at once proposed that he be allowed to appoint a committee of investigation from a group of nominees proposed by bodies of business and professional men. When the mild commission thus suggested was given some teeth,
by a bill from legislature providing that it should have authority to summon witnesses, to compel testimony, and to have control of its own funds, all measures new to the original bill suggested by the Mayor, it was passed. One representative was chosen from each of seven organizations, such as the Improvement Associations, the Chamber of Commerce, the Associate Board of Trade and the Merchants Association. These appointees, confirmed by the Mayor, organized themselves into the Finance Commission and went to work in a systematic, business-like way to probe the financial side of the administration. Some of the results of the investigation have been told in referring to the corruption, which had taken root in the city. It is sufficient here to say that acts of misgovernment were proven.

In January, 1909, the Commission made a report of its findings, with recommendations for the future. One remedy offered in this report for the misrule of the past years was a new city charter. This idea had long been discussed and many suggestions had been made, as to the form it should take. The plan presented by the majority of the Commission, had as its salient features the following:

A single chamber composed of nine members, elected at large, three each year, for a term of three years.

The extension of the Mayor's term of office to four years, with a recall possible at the end of two years, by
a majority of the voters at the State election.

The power of appointment and removal of departmental heads given to the Mayor; appointees being subject to approval by the Civil Service Commission.

A permanent, salaried finance commission of five members, appointed by the Governor.

Nomination of candidates by petition of five thousand voters registered, no party designations to appear upon the ballot.

This plan was taken up by a committee of one hundred prominent business and professional men, of all parties. They had been strongly urging charter revision upon the Legislature; they now recommended the Finance Commission's plan before the Committee of the Legislature. This scheme of charter revision was called "Plan Two". The party politicians opposed the measure and thru their efforts another plan was presented. It kept the party system, substituting the convention for the primary as a method of nomination, it kept the mayor's term unchanged, and provided for one chamber of thirty-six members, nine elected at large, and twenty-seven ward members. This was "Plan One."

These two charter schemes were submitted to the voters of the city, at the state election in November, 1909, as a referendum. "Plan Two" was adopted, largely because of the campaign carried on by the Committee of One Hundred in support of it. Thru all the investigation work of
the Finance Commission, the Good Government Association had given it all the help that lay within its power. It did not unreservedly commend "Plan Two" as a perfect charter bill, but, believing that it was a better scheme for Boston than "Plan One", its leaders threw themselves into the campaign for the adoption of "Two." Quite a number of the members of the Good Government Association were chosen for the Committee of One Hundred; one member of the Executive Committee of the Association served on the Executive Committee of the Committee of One Hundred and the Assistant Secretary of the Association served as Secretary of the whole Committee throughout its work.

Soon after the adoption of "Plan Two" by the voters came the pre-election campaign. At once a new Municipal Party, the Citizens' Municipal League, entered the field. With the adoption of the Charter the work of the Committee of One Hundred was finished, but before it disbanded, from it were chosen twenty-five of its members, representative of many different interests and both parties, and to this smaller group was left the task of selecting the best candidates available. The Committee of Twenty-five enlarged itself to over one hundred and fifty, and took the name of the Citizens' Municipal League. Its membership was made up of men of
men of different parties and creeds and social rank.

After sounding various possible candidates for the office of mayor and considering the matter at length among themselves, the members of the League chose as the man best fitted for the position James J. Storrow, a former president of the Chamber of Commerce.

Probably no more able man could have been found, but he was not a good vote-getter. The Good Government Association threw all of its forces into the field, in a strenuous effort to have him elected. Mr. Storrow spent over $200,000 in the campaign, according to his own statement. He was strenuous in speech making. Yet many distrusted him because of the way in which he had been nominated and because of his apparent recklessness in campaign expenditures. Wealth and high social standing are real obstacles to a candidate in some parts of the city. The result was that, helped by the candidacy of Mayor Hibbard, Mr. Fitzgerald was elected. The Citizens' Municipal League had nominated four men, then members of the Board of Aldermen, and five others for the Council of nine. Six of these were recommended by the Good Government Association, and five of the six were elected at the head of the ticket, three of them for three years and two for two years.

In the elections of 1910 the Citizens' Municipal
League made three nominations for Councilmen and joined with the Public School Association in making two for the School Board. The Good Government Association recommended all five for election. Two of the three, nominated for the Council, were elected, and both men recommended for the School Board.

The Boston Charter Association. After the new charter had been adopted, its friends were afraid that it would not be given an adequate trial but would be amended beyond recognition by the Legislature. Consequently in September, 1910, twenty-two citizens of Boston, headed by Maj. Higginson, Lawrence Minot, and Bernard J. Rothwell, organized themselves into the Boston Charter Association, to protect it until it had received a fair trial. This body, grown to a membership of about four hundred, this Spring successfully opposed bills to modify the charter, in the Senate.

Boston has not approached municipal perfection yet. There is still need for reform organizations, but something has been accomplished, particularly by the Good Government Association and the Citizens' Municipal League. The methods used by the Association have been to secure, file and publish information concerning the public lives, and qualifications for office of candidates, and to keep the
voter informed of what is going on in City Hall. The Executive Committee tries to carry out the first part of its purpose by sending to voters, on the eve of election, pamphlets containing the most important facts concerning men who are running for the more important offices. Recommendations have regularly been made concerning candidates for the office of mayor, street commissioner and aldermen, while in the smaller pamphlets dealing with the men running for the Council, before the new charter took effect, the Association contented itself with merely giving a man's record, including his votes on important measures, if he had before been in office. To keep the citizens informed concerning the current administration, "City Affairs," a monthly bulletin of news and comment upon matters of municipal interest and importance, is published and sent to any voter wishing it.

The Association is supported by the voluntary subscriptions of people interested in its work and success.

Its greatest faults, briefly stated, are lack of virility and failure to be intensely practical. Only occasionally is it aroused to such vigorous campaigning or to such plain speaking in its appeals to voters as to challenge them to do something for their city at once. Some men will vote well anyway, but we need the Good Government Association to arouse the lazy, half-hearted voters to the real importance
of the issues at stake, and the necessity of defeating bad candidates. Its other fault, that of being impracticable, has shown itself most apparently in the Association's unwillingness to accept the best man who has a good chance of being elected. He may not be the best man, but the best man defeated and the worst elected is worse than the second best man elected and the grafter defeated.

Other factors entering into the problem in Boston have been too frequent tampering with the machinery of local government by the legislature and the insignificance of the powers left to the Council,—not enough to attract men of great ability to give up their time to public service. Partly as a result, partly as a cause, of the comparatively moderate degree of success gained by Boston's municipal reform organizations, we must notice the lack of support given them by the newspapers, as compared to the help afforded reformers by the papers of New York and even more notably by those of Chicago. The total result is that Boston voters do not follow the lead of the Good Government Association with anything like the confidence accorded the Municipal Voters' League by the citizens of Chicago, and the proportion of Boston voters affected is proportionately smaller.
NEW YORK.

The fight for a good administration of the city's business in New York has been somewhat different from that in Boston or that in Chicago. In Chicago, and to a lesser degree in Boston, dishonesty and "graft" have been general, coming from many sources. In New York the fight has had to be waged against one party, Tammany Hall, the corrupt Democratic power of the city. Yet the real aim in view has been best attained only when the struggle has been to elect good men, regardless of the party from which they have come. It has been no single battle, fought and decided once and for all, but a running fight, carried on thru more than half a century, always against the same power, be it under a Tweed, or a Croker. Others parties have not been free from the taint of corruption, but their worst crimes of the tribe are not to be compared to the crimes of Manhattan.

It is necessary to comprehend the power and corruption of Tammany's government if we would get any true understanding of the municipal situation in New York during the last twenty-five years. In 1894 the Lexow committee, appointed by the State Assembly, reported that, in the last six years of Tammany administration the bonds issued had amounted to ...................... $58,356,858
This exceeded the issue of the preceding six years by ....................../. $22,123,760
The department appropriations for six years under Tammany were $15,495,397. That is, Tammany had cost the city in bonded indebtedness and expenditures a total of $274,671,076 as against the $337,051,919 of $6,000,000 of the six years preceding, an average increase per year.

Seven years later in 1901, Comptroller Coler stated that the expenditures of the Police Dept. in the territory now constituting Greater New York in 1890 was $6,267,337.97 but in 1900, under one Dept. it was $11,162,325.00 while Com. Murphy's estimate for 1902 was $12,092,611.47 nearly a million dollars more. Is it strange that the Merchants' Association complained of waste and extravagance?

To cover up traces of stealing, the city pay-roll was manipulated and the publication in the City Record, of all changes, new appointments, increases of salary and the like, required by law, was not made when ever it would have directed suspicion against the administration. By giving work to its followers, and making places on the pay-roll, a vast patronage was furnished the eleven hundred district captains of Tammany, and the machine voters were kept "happy" and in line.

Contracts furnished a rich chance for money making, particularly when the companies to whom they were awarded were dominated by politicians, who could use their official
power to favor their business interests. In 1898 Croker and his political friends transferred their financial interests from the Manhattan Electric Railroad to the Metropolitan Street Railway Co. About a year later, in 1899 they very nearly succeeded in obtaining for the Metropolitan Co. a franchise for an unlimited term.

Inefficiency must have been added to "graft", to make possible such statements as the following, from the report of the Tenement House Commission, submitted to the Assembly in 1901: "Out of three hundred and thirty-three tenement houses in the course of construction, inspected by the Commission in the Borough of Manhattan, only twenty-five were found in which there were no violations of law."

But it is in the Police Dept. that we find the worst examples of the machine's unequalled greed and corruption. In 1894 the Lexow Investigating Committee, to which reference has already been made, reported that the police had interfered with the rights of voters and allowed Tammany men to violate election laws. Police Commissioner McClave, when accused of receiving money for the appointment and promotion of policemen, resigned. It was later found that there was a regular tariff of prices for appointment and promotion on the force, from the $15,000 or $20,000, which the captain paid to become an inspector, to the $300 which was charged the applicant for the position of patrolman.
Yet the police had such chances for blackmail that this money was considered well invested. As a result of the Lexow investigation, four police captains were convicted of receiving bribes from houses of ill-fame and were dismissed. One of these was Capt. Devery who was appointed Chief of Police and afterwards Deputy Commissioner in Van Wyck's 1900 administration. Another was not only dismissed but sentenced to a term of imprisonment of three years and nine months and to the payment of a $1000 fine. A witness produced checks paid to Richard Croker, in connection with these cases.

Under Michael Murphy of Tammany as Police Commissioner and Wm Devery his first Deputy Commissioner in 1900 and 1901, vice was practically licensed, for the bribed police refused to interfere with it. Gambling houses, policy shops and pool-rooms were run freely: i.e. freely save for the blackmail extorted by the police for themselves and those "higher up." The New York Times of March 9th, 1900 estimated the annual amounts extorted from gambling places as follows:

"Pool rooms, 400, at $300 per month, $120,000 per yr. - $1,440,000
Crap games, 500, " 150 " " 75,000 " " 900,000
Gamb. Houses, 200, " 150 " " 30,000 " " 360,000
Gamb. Ho. Large 20, " 1,000 " " 20,000 " " 240,000
Envel. games, 50, " 50 " " 2,500 " " 30,000
Policy

Total $3,095,000"
But more revolting than all other kinds of license and corruption was the tolerance and blackmail of disorderly houses, and the "cadet system". In referring to a house of shame Justice Jerome was quoted in the "Times" of June 27, 1901 as saying, "That house is but one of hundreds within a radius of one mile from this building, where criminals are sometimes brought to justice. I will stake my reputation that there are scores within less than that distance from here, in which there are an average often of twelve children from thirteen to eighteen years old." The City Club in 1901 published a pamphlet on this matter in which facts are presented "to show:

the
That business of ruining young girls and forcing them into a life of shame, for the money there is in it has grown to considerable proportions in this city within the last three or four years.

That its existence is known to the police.
That the police make little or no effort to stop it.
That the police or those for whom they act, probably derive profit from the traffic in question.
That a reasonably active and efficient Police Dept. could stop the traffic.

In short the Police Force was receiving from the taxpayers about $12,000,000 to suppress crime and vice, and nearly as much from the vicious classes in black-mail to
"protect" it.

Year after year such conditions as these, varying only in degree, have marked Tammany secure in power. Because of this a score of reform and civic betterment organizations sprang up in as many years. Their history is less striking than the story of the crime and corruption which called them into being. The most important of these are taken up for brief consideration, a fuller treatment being reserved for the two or three which have proven most effective.

The Society for the Prevention of Crime In 1878 "the Society for the Prevention of Crime" was incorporated, the purpose of which is shown by its name. This society received public notice mainly because, in 1892 and 1893, its president, Dr. Parkhurst, the famous New York preacher, waged uncompromising warfare on the forces of evil from his pulpit, making such charges that the State Assembly voted an investigation under the Lexow Committee. The society also did yeoman service during the campaign against vice in 1901, when it carried on a number of raids on the "police-licensed" brothels and gambling places.

The City Reform Club The City Reform Club was organized in 1884 and reorganized into a smaller but more effective body two years later. It entered into the work of bettering
municipal politics very heartily and with some success, until the City Club took up the same work in a larger way in 1893 and 1894. Then it was disbanded and its members entered the younger club to avoid the duplication of reform machinery.

The German American Reform Union

In 1892 the German citizens of New York City, who were members of the Democratic party formed themselves into the German American Cleveland Union, to further the interests of their presidential candidate. After the campaign they were unwilling to lose their organization, so they organized as the German American Reform Union, opposed to the corrupt democracy of Tammany Hall. This body took a prominent part in the campaign of 1893, particularly thru the "Staats Zeitung" of Oswald Ottendorfer, their president. Although the Union was reorganized in 1894, it took no leading part in municipal reform after that year.

The City Vigilance League

Another of the reform societies, incubated by the local misgovernment of 1892, was the City Vigilance League. This organization divided the city into thirty sections and each section into
smaller divisions, identical with the election districts, in each one of which was placed a district worker. These with the leaders made up a force of 1137. Its aims were high, its methods apparently practical, its platform "non-partisanship", yet the law of the "survival of the fittest" somehow eliminated this force after a brief period of earnest work.

There have been a number of associations, which were not in the same class with the clubs and unions professedly established to replace bad government by good, yet so public spirited in their work that they deserve mention here. The Union League Club, a republican body pure and simple, has repeatedly set its party bias to one side and entered into an anti-Tammany campaign to elect a non-partisan slate of good men. The Chamber of Commerce and the Merchants' Association have frequently been stirred to vigorous action by the audacity of the municipal thieves. The faithful carrying out of a special work by the Lexow Commission and the Committee of Seventy will be mentioned in the account of achievements of the City Club of New York, the affiliated Good Government Clubs and the Citizens' Union.
The City Club  
In 1892 Mr. Boudewint Keith of 
New York  
of the City Reform Club, feeling 
that this body had worked within too narrow limits, 
urged an enlargement of the work of reform. The result 
of his agitation was the City Club, incorporated in 
that same year, with a membership of 500. A club-
house was opened at 677 Fifth Avenue and a business 
office at 27 Pine Street. Its purpose, as stated in 
the constitution, was "to aid in securing permanent 
good government for the City of New York through the 
election and appointment of honest and able municipal 
officers and establishment of a clear and stable sys-
tem of laws, relating to the city". The complete 
separation of the State and National elections from 
those of the city and a non-partisan running of the 
city government were also aimed at by the club.

The Good 
Government Clubs  
During the first year its 
greatest work was educational. 
In several Assembly Districts 
members of the City Club formed Good Government Clubs, 
including citizens of all parties. Four were organi-
zied before the end of 1893 and twenty more in 1894. 
The aim of these clubs was to interest as large a num-
ber of voters as possible in putting better men into
office, to teach them the election laws, to train them as
watchers for the polls, and in some way to keep them
all busy working for the same cause.

In 1890 an unsuccessful campaign had been waged
against Tammany, with the slogan "Municipal government
is business not politics". That cry was taken up in
1893 by the City Reform Club, the City Club, and the
Good Government Clubs. The Republican Union League
Club also declared itself in favor of non-partisan
government for the City of New York. Undoubtedly the
whole reform movement received a great impetus from the
work of the Lexom Commission, appointed in accordance
with a resolution of the New York City Assembly, passed
Jan. 31, 1892, to investigate the New York City Police
Department. Money for this work to the extent of
$17,500 was advanced by the Chamber of Commerce, when
the Governor tried to tie the Commission's hands by
vetoing the Assembly's measure providing it with funds.
The results of this investigation have already been
given, in speaking of the need of reform work. The
revelations were such that one Police Commissioner
resigned and four captains were dismissed, one under
sentence of fine and imprisonment. The whole matter
was so sensational that it received much attention
the press and great opposition to the power behind such an administration was aroused.

One result of this was a meeting called in 1894, at the Madison Square Garden, to which were invited a number of men chosen from both parties. Mr. Joseph LaRocque presided. Addresses were made and a committee of seventy was chosen, with Mr. LaRocque as chairman. The general committee asked all party conventions to adjourn, after electing conferees to a joint convention which should nominate an anti-Tammany ticket. Non-partisanship was talked a great deal, but the conferees could not forget politics entirely and it was only by considerable diplomacy that all the parties were finally won over to a ticket, headed by William L. Strong, a Republican, for Mayor, and John W. Goff, a Democrat, for Recorder. The press, almost without exception, was for reform and lent its columns to the work of arousing a general reform sentiment. Cartoons were published and campaign literature issued, in which the following charges were made against Tammany Hall:

(1) It was an undemocratic institution.

(2) It appointed inefficient and dishonest men.

(3) It was guilty of blackmail, extortion, and the mishandling of public monies.
(4) It had spent tax monies extravagantly.

(5) Its increased expenditures were due to dishonesty.

The City Club with its small membership and the Good Government Clubs with their larger following had been in the thick of the campaign from the first. When the smoke of election cleared away it was found that the non-partisan ticket had been elected.

In 1895 five meetings of the City Club were held, the Good Government Clubs were watched and helped, and every effort was made to continue the educational work and hold all that had been won. Gradually a better system was evolved. The affairs of the Club were put in the hands of particular committees, and those who had experience and foresight settled down to a long fight.

In 1897, by the union of several cities, Greater New York, the largest City in America, was formed and a new charter adopted. The City Club's Legislative Committee had been very busy examining the proposed Charter Bill, making suggestions and criticisms, and sending to Legislature and press, bulletins containing their views on the bill.
The Citizens' movement which resulted in a new municipal party. The Assembly had separated municipal from State and national elections, and the club took that opportunity to project their long-considered plan. Its founders thus explain its name, the "Citizens' Union", "By this term we meant an association of voters, devoted to the one end of securing permanently for the city honest government and efficient administration of the city's affairs, unqualifiedly pledged to resist all considerations of national and state politics and parties in the election of city officers and the government of the city."

A regular organization was effected and the enrollment of new members was begun. By June 120,000 voters were pledged to its candidates. The attempt was made to have a committee in every Assembly District throughout the city of Greater New York. Ex-Mayor Seth Low of Brooklyn, then President of Columbia University, was nominated and his candidacy vigorously pushed. On the eve of election the candidate of the Jeffersonian Democracy died, and Tammany elected Van Wyck Mayor of the city.
1897 was a busy year for the legislative committee of the City Club. A protest was entered at Albany against infringement of home rule. Three bills were particularly objected to after their passage by the Assembly. One would have turned over the New York streets to the Street Railways. The second dealt with the appointment of the Police Magistrates, greatly reducing the requirements for that office. The third would arbitrarily have compelled the city to increase its school teachers' salaries by an amount totaling a million dollars. The Governor refused to sign any of these bills and they failed to become laws.

In December 1899 a program was adopted by the Club's Council to act as an incentive and guide for their future work, telling some of their most important aims in a concise way. The Club would work for:

(1) The enactment of a law to forbid the payment of political assessments or contributions by candidates for judicial offices.

(2) The enactment of the reform law proposed by the Club and introduced in the Senate in 1899, by Senator Ellsbury.

(3) The enactment of a law to secure freedom of nomination to public elective offices.

(4) The assisting of the Assembly Investigating Committee in its work.
(5) The reform of the administration of the department of building, and the study and criticism of the new building code.

(6) Pressing upon the attention of the city authorities and of the public the facts in connection with the enormous waste of water, which is now, instead of being relieved, made an excuse for urging the city to greatly enlarge its expenditure on account of water supply.

(7) Action as to the continual abuses reported in the conduct of the office of the District Attorney.

(8) Watching and reporting upon the work of the Municipal Assembly.

(9) Watching and reporting upon the Board of Education and the School Boards.

(10) Careful and full investigation of the subject of public investigations in the city.

In October 1899, a meeting was held at which were represented The City Club, The Citizens’ Union, The Bar Association, The Republican County Convention, The Social Reform Club, The Chamber of Commerce, and the Reform Club. The Independent Labor Party sent a message of sympathy with the aim and work of the meeting, the object of which was to fight Tammany on a joint ticket for the Judicial offices. With very few changes the slate, drawn up by this joint committee, went before the voters and the men it
nominated were elected to office, though not without a
tremendous amount of work on the part of the campaign
committees.

The next year, with Van Wyck entering upon his second
term as Mayor, the city government was run very much as he
and Croker thought best.

The Fusionist
Campaign of 1901

The year 1901 brought out the
Fusionist campaign against Tammany,
the greatest achievement of the
local reform forces since they had taken up the struggle.
The Council of the City Club invited non-nominating bodies
to a conference of a non-partisan union, the Fusion Move-
ment. Meanwhile, Tammany's administration was being over-
hauling. The Chamber of Commerce had appointed a committee
of fifteen, which unearthed vice and corruption in raid
after raid. The Society for the Prevention of Crime did
likewise with similar results. Even Tammany's investigat-
ing committee of five discovered terrible conditions. All
the year through revelations were being made concerning the
blackmail and corruption of the Police Department under
Murphy and Devery. Hatred of Tammany burned hotter than it
had done for years and it was in this white heat that the
desired fusion was brought about. The non-partisans again
ominated Seth Low. The campaign was bitter; the issue was
drawn by the reformers upon the question of whether or not
the voters wished to continue the party in power guilty of such systematic debauchery of morals as had been permitted under Mayor Van Wyck. The City Club, uniting with the Women's Municipal League, printed numerous posters and three very effective pamphlets entitled respectively, "Some Things Richard Croker has Said and Done", "Ten Months of Tammany", and "Facts for New York Parents", the last by Gustavus Myers, on the "Cadet System". It stirred New York to its depths. Tammany attempted no reply.

Low was easily elected and started putting his house in order. It took a year's trial of Commissioner Partridge at the head of the Police force, to prove that an honest man may not be an able one. Then General Francis Greene and from chaos and corruption the police force emerged less degraded, more efficient than it had been for years.

But enough has been told to show something of the need of the City Club and something of its work. Further recital would be largely repetition. In 1904 the Club was again re-organized, this time merging the Council with the Board of Trustees which then numbered sixteen. There is now a president, five vice-presidents, a secretary, and treasurer, all elected by the trustees. The actual work is mainly carried on through the following committees: executive, house, literary and publication, membership, finance, legislation, tenement house, charities, civil service, city affairs,
and municipal conferences. The Club has an annual meeting in April, and the trustees have monthly meetings. But all this is just a greater systematizing of its former effective machinery. The same work which it now seeks to do it has been struggling to perform for years.

Its Legislative Committee has kept constant watch on all bills introduced into the State Legislature and has carefully considered all those affecting the great metropolis. The work of this committee during one year will illustrate something of the enormity of the task to which its members set themselves. There were, that year, about three hundred bills in the Senate, and six hundred in the Assembly, nine hundred and fifty in all, dealing with local affairs. This is a smaller number than have been looked over in some years, as the fifteen hundred in 1902. From this mass of bills those of no importance are eliminated, those of importance are divided into two classes, one to be favored, the other to be opposed. In the year we are considering thirty two memoranda on bills approved or objected to, were sent to the governor, legislators, the papers, and the members of the Club,—25,000 documents in all.

The Finance Committee has the work of raising funds sufficient for the war-chest, no inconsiderable task when we realize that for the year 1901 the treasurer reported $22,931 in disbursements. This money is largely received
from the Club members.

In the year 1905 the Membership Committee had raised the number of those who belonged to the Club to 1,154. The City Affairs Committee watches the Municipal Assembly, its membership, and its business. This is such work as the preferring of charges against the District Attorney and bringing pressure enough to bear so that he is removed from office, by the Governor, "on previous charges", as was done in 1901. The Tenement House Committee watches the building laws, with the Legislative Committee, and then watches the inspectors to see that they really inspect, accomplishing more than can be told in this brief mention, to better slum conditions. The Municipal Conference Committee does such work as that accomplished in 1902, when at the invitation of the Council, a meeting of the representatives of various civic and charitable societies was held and the following plan adopted for a federation of their organizations.

Co-

(1) Name,-the Council for Civic/Operation.

(2) Object,- Economy and Co-operation of the constituent organizations.

(3) The Council is to be made up of delegates, one from each organization.

(4) The Council will elect its own officers from the delegates chosen by their organizations. It is to
organize each October.

(5) An Executive Committee is to be formed, in which are to be represented different classes of organizations, political, educational, social, philanthropic.

(6) The regular secretary of the Council will learn from the delegates the work of their organizations and keep them in touch with the objects of the Council.

(7) The work of the Council will not be to compel any particular program of action or work. It is to be merely advisory. That the Club's Committee realizes the weakness that lies in so much overlapping of reform machinery is proven by this extract from its report to the Club,

"Nothing seems to your Committee on Conference and Co-operation more obvious than that there is, in the work of the almost innumerable reform organizations in the City Of New York, a great waste of labor and a distressing degree of ineffectiveness. We believe that the waste of labor proceeds largely from the duplication of labor, and the ineffectiveness from failure in co-operation." Another weakness appears to us as we look back over the Club's work in the excessive activity of that hard working Legislative Committee. It has tried to legislate a good city, to have

* Paragraph.
one enacted at Albany, which is looking too far up the Hudson for it. This constant turning to the State Legislature for relief is a serious blow to Home Rule, the one thing most necessary to awaken in voters a desire for the ballot. Good government can come only when we get good men to govern. Another trouble lies in the fact that the New York City Charter gives so little power to the Aldermen that it is hard to find good men who are willing to accept the office, at the sacrifice of time and trouble, and as seventy-three men must be elected to the Board, a large number of them are bound to be lacking in the mental and moral strength absolutely necessary for good public servants. In summing up the case, the City Club of New York, the Good Government Clubs, and the Affiliated Citizens' Union we may say briefly that their aim is a non-partisan, honest, business administration of the municipal government. The methods they try to use are the making of good laws, the education of the voters to a sense of their power and responsibilities, the setting of a close watch upon all public officers and all public business in order to help what is for the public good and oppose all else.
A comparison of the municipal affairs of Chicago in 1898 and 1910 shows the remarkable advance that has been made along these lines. Reform real and lasting has been gained, not perfection, not the elimination of all corruption, perhaps, but an improvement so great as to have given her honest and efficient municipal government. What has caused all this change? Mainly the improved personnel of the City Council. And what force is responsible for this improvement? More than any other, the Municipal Voters' League.

Rightly to understand how the League came to be formed and why, it is only necessary, to be acquainted with conditions in Chicago at the time of its organization. Corruption was the rule in all matters political, and all this centered around the City Council. A few quotations from an article by Lincoln Steffens, on "Chicago, Half Free and Fighting On," will serve to show the depths of the city's degradation. He speaks of it then as "Chicago, first in violence, deepest in dirt, lewd, law-less, unlovely, ill-smelling, irreverent, new; an over-grown gawk of a village, the tough among the cities, a spectacle for the nation. The city was pretty solid black. Criminally
it was wide open; commercially it was brazen; socially it was thoughtless and raw; it was a settlement of individuals and groups and interests, with no common city sense and no political conscience. There were political parties but the organizations were controlled by rings, which in turn were parts of state rings, which in turn were backed and used by leading business interests.---The grafting was miscellaneous and very general; but the most open corruption was that which centered in the City Council.---They were so unbusinesslike that business men went into the City Council to reduce the festival of blackmail to decent and systematic bribery." Exposures of "boddling" had been made; trials had been held; occasional convictions of some of the worst grafters gained, yet corruption persisted, and all this despite one of the best civil service laws in any city in the nation. Another method had been tried. Good honest men had gotten into the Council from good wards but they were so out numbered, so easily out voted that their best efforts were futile. Franchise rights for the use of the city's streets for various public utilities were sold to the highest bidders at great loss to the peoples' interests. "The council was organized for revenue only. Meritorious measures were held up and sand-bagged, and blanket franchises were handed out to adventurers of the Yerkes type," one writer says. Yerkes, the
street-car magnate, had come to Chicago from Philadelphia, believing that here was a place where his methods would succeed admirably. On several occasions the leaders of the "gray wolves," as the boodlers were called, passed fake franchises for companies which never existed and then held up corporations and made them buy these rights at very much their own figures.

Had Illinois been possessed of a worthy General Assembly the decent element would probably have appealed to this for relief, but the same state of affairs existed in Springfield as in Chicago, and so the honest people of the city were fortunately forced back upon the most democratic method of relieving the situation, that of improving the membership of their own council, by electing better men to it. Moreover, the Council was well worth saving. It had real powers. One reason why it had been so bad, with bad Aldermen controlling it, was because they had so much power. Could the grafters be replaced by men of honesty, and efficiency, the body would be as strong for good government as it had been for corruption. During recent years the Council has taken the initiative in many important affairs, and the mayor has often been more of a follower than a leader. This method of reform has been different from that adopted in Boston and New York where appeal has been made time after time over local authorities to the
State legislature. Boston's far-famed municipal subways have been constructed under the supervision of a board created by an act of the Legislature and appointed by the Governor. Boston's park system and even police force are directed by the State and not the City. The board of Aldermen in both New York City and Boston has comparatively few powers. In Chicago each Alderman has REAL power, and the annual salary is $3,000. A president of the Chicago Board of Trade accepted nomination and election to the board for the sake of the good he could do there.

Because of all the corruption in the city government two hundred and fifty representative men were called together, in a meeting presided over by Lyman J. Gage to see what could be done. This was held under the auspices of the Civic Federation, an organization loosely binding together a number of minor clubs and charitable bodies. A committee of fifteen was chosen to DO something. A sub-committee was chosen, and at first these committees "just met and talked and fumbled," as one of their members said. They wanted to DO something. Not merely expose, not organize a new municipal party, not get a new city charter yet, but to DO something. But out of the talking and "fumbling" grew the Municipal Voters' League. George E. Cole, "King Cole," as they called him, five feet tall, a "second class business man," but
a fighter, was appointed to pick out eight others and organize the Municipal Voters' League. He didn't get but six others appointed until after the first campaign however. A committee of 100 was also appointed, composed of one Republican and one Democrat "from each of the thirty-four wards then in the city, and thirty-two chosen from the city at large."

By February of 1896 they were ready to go to work for the next Aldermanic election in April. Their first step was carefully to investigate the record of every Alderman in the Council. They at once decided that there were in its membership of 68, "58 'skates', 3 dubious and 7 O.K."

And they promptly reported their findings to the voters. Then they set to work particularly upon the records of the 34 aldermen retiring in April, for the term of office is two years, and a half of the board retires each year. Cole made no secret of his plans. He said to the voters, "We are going to publish the records of the thieves who want to get back to the trough." The good aldermen helped. 26 of the 34 who were retiring were branded as rogues. The news-papers took up the matter and published the "write-ups" that Cole and his helpers turned over to them, "mighty interesting reading," as the little fighter said. Some of the retiring aldermen promptly announced that they would not be candidates for re-election; others were defiant and
refused to withdraw until in private interviews they found that the officers of the League were possessed of accurate and detailed information about their lives, public and private, which they were most eager to have suppressed. Some refused to withdraw even then. Law suits were threatened, but the League has always been so careful of the accuracy of any information that it has made public that no suit against its officers has ever been allowed to come to judgment.

The wards were studied. Independent support was promised and given very vigorously, wherever no good candidate was put into nomination by any of the dominant parties. No nominations were made by the League. The responsibility for those was wisely left with party leaders but the whole force of the League was thrown into the contest for the "best" man." The slogan of that first campaign was "aggressive HONESTY." Ability was made less of. The crying need of the Council was for men who could resist corruption. Sometimes the candidates that the League worked for were not men of whom it approved, but for whom it worked because they were the lesser of two evils, and an independent would have stood no chance of election.

The League officers were rushed night and day throughout the campaign. Cole toured ward after ward in the interest of the men the League had recommended, making
fiery, ringing speeches, calling spades "spades," working and fighting right up to election day morning, all his helpers with him, and the papers joining forces and lending their columns to the cause of good government. Of the 26 outgoing aldermen with bad records, 16 were not renominated. Of the 10 who were, 4 were beaten at the polls. When the votes were counted it was found that the Leagues' recommendation had been followed in 25 wards and disregarded in 6. In the other 3 they had made no recommendations.

After the election of 1896 the executive committee added to itself two new members to make up the nine, of which it was supposed to consist, incorporated the League, drew up a constitution giving all power to the "9", called together the "100 respectables" of the larger committee, submitted their actions to them for ratification and dismissed them. They have never met since, for all the work is done by the smaller executive committee which is self-perpetuating.

Then the League workers settled down to a long, hard fight. Their investigators continued gathering information, compiling statistics, doing all they could to get ready for the campaign of the next year. Cole remained president and active head of the work, Hoyt King was his Secretary. The honest and reform aldermen made taking speeches in the Council, to get them in the papers and make people better
aware of the corruption and general rottenness all thru its daily routine of business. The motto of the League in its work, and of the decent aldermen in their opposition to grafting, all thru that year and for several years to come was "the proper compensation to the city for public franchises".

Then came the second preliminary report of the League, published in the early part of 1897 before the expiration of the terms of those Aldermen who had been in office since before the formation of the League. The League condemned 27 of the 34 retiring officers, that were Aldermen and of these 27, fifteen were not renominated. 12 who had been condemned, defied the League and ran again for office. 9 of them were defeated. This election gave the honest part of the Council a clear third which was enough to uphold the Mayor. How important that was we can realize only when we find that in 1897 the Council had to approve or reject the Allen Bill, brought from a corrupt legislature by Yerkes, for the purpose of extending his traction-rights in the Chicago streets for a term of fifty years. The Mayor, with the loyal help of the honest one-third of the Council, defeated Yerkes and his Bill, by a hair. The Allen Bill was repealed by the General Assembly of 1899, with only one dissenting vote.

1898 was the League's hardest year. Its officers were
forced in this campaign to condemn men, whom they had re-
commended two years before, but who had been unable to keep
straight, where it was so unusual for anyone to be honest
and where it seemed foolishness not to lay up a little for
a rainy day, from the bribes that came so easily. Yet this
year, by hard consistent fighting, the League gained a nom-
inal majority of the Council. Much had been said of a non-
partisan organization of the Council, in order that ability,
not party affiliation, might decide this and the resulting
make-up of committees. But the dominant party was allowed
to organize, despite all that had been said and, tho it was
well done, that was not the non-partisanship for which the
League had pleaded. As a last straw, in the midst of the
reactionary tendency and the movement against reform, Cole
was obliged to retire from the presidency, by ill health,
and the demand of his business for all his time, as the
"boodlers" had tried to ruin him in this way. King also
retired, and in their places, Wm. Kent and A. B. Pond took
up the fight. Under their leadership the League met the
reactionary movement, turned it and went on aggressively
and successfully.

The next year 1899 brought the fourth campaign in which
it had taken part. Before election day, the League pledged
all its candidates to a non-partisan organization of the
Council. It won by a clear majority and no party lines
were drawn, when the Council organized.

In 1900, altho the majority of good Aldermen was increased, they had not been pledged to non-partisanship and the republicans organized the Council. By this time its membership had been much improved. Efficiency had become an element, almost as needful to an alderman as honesty, if he wanted the League's endorsement. Yerkes had left Chicago for London. The forces of "graft" had found in their failure to beat clean honesty a proof that the reform had come to stay, and since corruption was too expensive an amusement to engage in, unless it was successful as a means of gaining favoring legislation, the League had found easier sledding after 1898.

Great advances were made during the next three years when Fisher was secretary. The League moved to its present permanent head quarters. There it has filling cabinets where are kept ward statistics of all kinds, dealing with the members, past and present, of the Council, with the educational, racial, political and religious characteristics of each ward, street by street, and with other tabulated information of use to the League in its campaigns. Fisher said: "We have four shots at every man headed for the Council, one with his record when his term expires; another when he is up for nomination; a third when he running as a candidate; and the fourth when the committees are formed."
If he is bad he is put on a minority in a strong committee". The League always has a man present at every Council meeting to keep watch of everything that transpires, and it is from his reports and the Council records that the formal bulletins and reports of the League are made out.

Of the work of the League since 1900 there is little to say. It has been good and effective. The old "gray wolves" have practically all gone and an attempted revolt in March of 1909, by a number of the wolf-whelps, in the Council, who heard the call of the wild and attempted to force a partisan organization upon the Council, met with defeat. A proof of the extent to which the voters believe in the League and follow its advice is found in the fact that one ward, normally democratic, has been carried by very substantial majorities alternately for a Republican, a Democrat and a Republican, on successive years, in accordance with the advice of the League. Another illustration is found in this excerpt from a little league bulletin published in 1909. "Of the reliable minority of this committee two came up and both were re-elected by increased majorities. One of the condemned majority was the Republican candidate in the 25th ward which recently gave Mr. Taft 9,400 plurality. He lost by 1,500 votes to an independent, endorsed by the League." In 1908 we find this record, "endorsed by the League and elected—18. Preferred by the
League and elected--6. No preference expressed--2. Con-
demned by the League but elected--9. Total Aldermen elected--35.

What have been the reasons for the success of the Municipal Voters' League and what are its methods of work?

Briefly the reasons for its success are these:

It has always been sure of its facts before doing anything, but when it was sure it has been absolutely fearless and absolutely frank in its attitude to both candidate and voter.

It has had the highest ideals possible of what an alderman should be and of how he should do his work and yet, despite those ideals, it has been intensely practical, meeting politicians on their own ground and beating them at their own game of politics, fighting hard, but always squarely. It has often used a bad man to defeat a worse and has let no rain-bow idealism interfere with getting the best possible when absolute best was impossible.

It has had the press with it from the very first gun on almost every recommendation it has made.

It has worked very democratically with the City's Council as a basis, and, as an ally, the voter who wants decent government in the city, regardless of what national party affiliations good candidates might have. It has done this instead of appealing to the Assembly.
The method used can be briefly summed up as that of giving the voter the facts about important issues and Council candidates. The League depends upon the votes of the men who are interested in a decent city government and who are willing to disregard the national party labels, that are put on a candidate for local office. This contingent is not large enough to hold the balance of power, and to make it of interest to the party leaders of the different wards, to put up the best men for office in order to get the League's recommendation and to draw that vote. It hasn't always worked this way. In some wards the League has been successfully defied, but it has worked in enough wards to give an honest non-partisan majority in the city Council.

Every year, in January or February, a report is published of the work of the Council for the preceding year and of the probable measures and issues to come before the Council during the next two years, the term of the Aldermen who will be elected in the following April. This tends to keep keen the interest of the voters in the coming elections, and means more reform votes at the polls. Another report beside possible bulletins published in the interim is issued on the eve of election, giving the record of all the men, who are candidates for re-election and usually recommending one man, because of his good character and po-
political strength, for whom friends of reform should vote. A few samples from the reports and bulletins published just before the retirement of aldermen, and from the recommendations given candidates for office, may illustrate the force and clearness of the language used by the League in its characterization and comments. This one is taken from the Ninth Annual Preliminary report of 1904:

"Passing of the 'Gray Wolves'"—"The Council is now nearly rid of the old "gray wolves", and the few of the pack remaining are retiring rapidly. It is announced that Powers of the 19th ward, Kunz 16th ward, Stukart 4th ward, and Novak 10th ward, will not be candidates for re-election, when their terms expire this spring. Brennan of the 18th ward is now doing time in the Bridewell, where he belongs along with the thugs and criminals whose votes he has been in the habit of buying. That would leave remaining of the old "gang" only Kenna of the first ward, and Cullerton of the eleventh, with Conlon of the eighteenth and Coughlin of the first, candidates for re-election."

Twenty-first ward, "John Minwegen--Finishing second term; good record; conspicuously active; devotes practically entire time to city affairs."

Sometimes a bit of humor relieves the sharpness of the criticism. Nineteenth ward, "John Powers--In Council since 1888; always one of its worst and most dangerous
members; said not to be a candidate for re-election; regards the state senate as a better field for his particular talents".

Eighteenth ward, "Michael C. Conlon---Finishing fourth term; political ally of John J. Brennan, now No. 377 in the Bridewell; Conlon is totally unfit to be alderman and should be defeated."

From the fourteenth Annual Preliminary Report 1909, "First ward--Michael Kenna--Senior member of political firm of Kenna and Coughlin. The assets of this partnership are: Ownership of democratic ward organization, a hand in the control of Republican ward organization, and two votes in the City Council. The books of the firm are not open to the public, but the business probably pays well, for neither partner shows any disposition to retire. The first ward, the ward richest in business property and influence, the business home of the men who have made Chicago, annually renews the license of this firm. Why?"

Again, "Eleventh Ward--Edward F. Cullerton--in Council from year of Chicago fire to date, except two intermissions when voters rose against him. A remnant of the old gang. During last term has remained a noisy nuisance, making frequent grandstand plays in which he poses as a friend of the people. His votes and attitude are vicious. To make specifications would unduly dignify him. It would
pay the city to retire him on a pension.

Twelfth ward, "Micheal Zimmer-Finishing fourth term. Record shows independence, ability and integrity. Especially useful and reliable in committees. Voted against passing light ordinances over Mayor's veto; voted against jamming telephone ordinance thru."

An extract follows from the "Daily News" of March 31, 1905, which gave a first page column and almost a whole inside page to the complete ante-election report of recommendation and warning. Concerning Micheal Kenna there is a quarter column a part of which runs as follows: "Micheal Kenna-Democrat; lives 276 Michigan Ave., proprietor of two saloons, 279 and 300 Clark St., finishing fourth term as alderman, known as 'Hinky Dink'; League said of him in its preliminary report, 'Fit representative of the dissolute, vicious and criminal elements that infest certain parts of his ward, but it is a disgrace that the great business section of the city should be represented in the Council by such an alderman'". A list of his misdeeds and bad record followed. Another characteristic record is that of Patrick Moynihan, in the League report as published in the Record-Herald of April 1, 1909. It was as follows, "Republican-lives at 719 Minty Second Place; 39 years old; finishing fourth term; bad record; voted March 29 to overthrow non-partisan method of organizing the Council;"
voted to pass electric light ordinance over veto; voted to jam telephone ordinance thru Council; has been praised by some for his activity in securing local improvements in his ward; here it should be noted that Alderman Koyniham has been connected with the Calumet Coal and Teaming Company, a corporation which has done a large amount of work on local improvements in his ward; his connection with this company is of itself a sufficient reason for retiring Alderman Koyinhn from the Council. This greedy, trouble-some and dangerous alderman represents himself, and not the ward, and should be beaten."

Each year a platform, dealing with vital city problems such as franchises, and stating general principles, like non-partisanship, is drawn up and submitted to all candidates. They may make any additions or changes in it that they wish, sign it as it is, or refuse to. If they sign it it is filed away and they are more definitely bound by this pledge to the voters than by the mere vapid promisings of pre-election oratory.

Some of the planks in the 1909 platform were as follows:

1. The aldermanic office involves service for the whole people. An alderman should discharge his duties with an eye not solely to the local interests of his ward, but to the city's interest at large.

3. All council committees should be organized strictly on the basis of integrity and fitness and without regard to party.
5. No alderman should seek or demand a permit, special privilege or immunity for any individual or corporation in conflict or inconsistent with the public interest, or denied to the citizens generally.

8. An alderman should uphold the strict enforcement of the civil service law and application of the merit system to municipal employment.

9. Grants for street railways, subways, tunnels, wharves, docks, and other public utilities, including telephone, telegraph, gas and electric lighting, heating, refrigerating, power and other like services, should be for as short a term as is consistent with the best service to the public, which term should not in any case exceed twenty years. All grants to a given corporation or individual should expire at the same time, and no supplemental or collateral grant should run beyond the time when the main grant expires.

12. No grant should be made for any public utility, without expressly reserving to the City the opportunity for municipal purchase, at or before the expiration of such grant, upon fair terms and reasonable notice.

13. All public service corporations are entitled to a fair return on the actual value of the tangible property employed by them in properly conducting such public utilities, over and above all proper and legitimate expenses and charges for depreciation and renewals. The remaining income from such public utilities should be conserved for the people and should be realized by them either in reduced rates or a percentage of the receipts as direct compensation, or both.

15. The application of the referendum to such matters of grave public importance as the issuance of municipal bonds, has for years operated with distinct advantage and the opportunity should be afforded for its application to the settlement of all important policies with reference to public utilities.

I, the undersigned, a candidate for alderman from the ward, freely place the foregoing platform before my constituents and the whole people of the City of Chicago
and pledge myself to adhere to these principles and to work
and to vote in committee and on the floor of the council to
carry out the same.

Besides this method of working thru the publishing of
the facts concerning measures and men, the League throws a
force of speakers into each campaign, particularly to help
independents whom they are pushing because no good candidate
has been named in that ward by any of the parties.

It seems quite incomprehensible that this self-con-
stituted body of advisers should be able to sway a city and
make it vote one way or the other, by the records it gives
different men, but such is the case and as long as it con-
tinues its work as wisely and as disinterestedly as it has,
it will probably continue to exercise its present power for
good. Chicago isn't perfect yet, far from it, but not so
far from it as it was before the formation of the Municipal
Voters' League of Chicago in 1895.
Boston, New York, Chicago,—each has presented different problems to the practical reformer, and in each city the reform movement has varied from that in any other. The work and methods of the most important municipal good government organizations in each of these three cities has been discussed separately at some length, but a better comparison may be obtained by bringing together a few of the salient features which have marked their activities, noticing the success, or lack of it, won by each and trying to find the reason for it. From such a consideration we should be able to decide which are the most effective plans and methods for the average city, if any city with all its special problems may be called "average".

In New York the general indignation against Tammany among all the better classes, made a fruitful field in which to sow the seed of a non-partisan reform, for honest and efficient administration of the city's business. It might seem, an almost insurmountable obstacle to reform work would be found in a condition of extreme corruption in involving the collusion between the vicious classes and the police force, the use of the city treasury as a campaign fund and the incumbency of some of the highest office by men bent on feathering their own nests and strengthening their party machines at the expense of the public welfare. Really the
reverse is true, if there is an electorate capable of being
aroused for an united effort to end such an administration.
A large part of Chicago's immediate success in bettering
her Council came from just this same righteous wrath of good
men against evil conditions. The torch of great abuses was
ready at hand and men's zeal for good government was the
fire kindled by it in the hands of aggressive reformers.

Boston's municipal record has been far from immaculate
but she has never produced such open, flagrant corruption
in city government as her two sister cities and her reformers
have therefore never had this to use as a club against
the evil powers in office, and have never been able to win
for their organizations the loyal allegiance of the great
body of good voters by playing the part of St. George who
has slain the terrible dragon. The beast in this city has
been more of a wolf and the Good Government Association has
often played the part of the barking, snapping watch-dog,
rather than anything more heroic. But even a watch-dog
often renders valuable service.

The City Club of New York, like the Good Government
Association, was launched amid a number of other similar
organizations, and each one has been handicapped by that
fact. Admitting that their fields of activity may not
completely overlap this is yet a source of weakness to them.
Different phases of the work to be done make their appeal
to different men, but that doesn't necessitate a different body of workers to meet that need. Chicago has been benefitted by the concentration of all her reform forces into one or two leagues. Various committees within these have tried to better conditions of city life and politics in a number of different ways, but all in one body and all cooperating. The result has been freedom from "the duplicating of reform machinery", to use the phrase of the City Clubs Committee on Cooperation. The fad of amateur municipal uplift has been a curse to the real progress of that movement, by splitting it up into a score of different clubs, and societies and leagues. We need intensive work more than extensive, and to the end of gaining this we need to have dinned into our ears incessantly the old adage, "In Union is strength". New York has won much be a "Fusion" Movement, but Chicago had enough of its better citizens already fused, in the following of the Municipal Voters' League, to hold the balance of power in the city. Another advantage which Chicago had over New York and Boston was a corrupt State Legislature in Illinois at the time of the inception of the Voters' League. If the city reformers could have appealed to the General Assembly for help in taking away the power of the corrupt politicians, who were ruling, they undoubtedly would have done so, but the city "rings" were only parts of the odious state "rings", and the same conditions of "graft" and "bribery", which in
Chicago had called the League into existence, flourished on a larger scale, if less openly, at Springfield. The effect of this was to drive the League workers back to an appeal to the voter, the original source of both city and state authority, and this was a most wholesome result, for now changing legislatures do not change the administration of the city, do not play dominoes with the powers of one or another department of the city's government, do not issue new charters at the appeal of some faction which wants to try again the vain experiment of bringing the Kingdom of Heaven down into our city streets, by act of legislature.

Good government is possible only with good, able men in office, and these men can get into power only by the votes of the people whom they govern, if our democratic principles of representative government are to be upheld. In New York and Boston the doubtful expedient of many state commissions has been tried. This is not "home rule" and as local affairs make the best appeal to the average voter's interest, the removal of his power to be intimately connected with the carrying on of the administration of these local affairs is bound to diminish his concern in all government and his value of the ballot, already too lightly esteemed. It is a temporary good gained at the cost of a permanent injury. The best education of the voter in the use of his ballot, comes not with the acquiring of a theoretical knowledge.
thru lectures given before Good Government Clubs, nor thru information sent out in copies of "City Affairs", profitable as that may be, but in the experience of helping to decide with his vote really momentous issues in which he is concerned. That the Municipal Voters's League did not appeal for good government to the legislature over the heads of the people was largely due to the accident of there being a corrupt General Assembly, as we have said. Another accidental state of affairs made for its success, and that was the real power held by the Chicago City Council, under the existing charter. All that was necessary to change the charter of the administration was to change the membership of the Council. It was worth saving. It is even better, keeping saved under the more recently adopted charter, for a position upon the Board of Aldermen carries with it power enough and opportunity enough for public service, yes and salary enough, at $3,000 per year, to appeal to men of ability, and large business experience,—to a former President of the Chicago Board of Trade, to quote a concrete example. This has not been true of the Board of Aldermen in either New York or Boston. These Boards have not been able to appeal to the busy men of affairs, whom they have needed to care for them vast amounts of business. They have not been important enough either to arouse the voters to defend them. Boston's new Council, to which only three men are elected
annually, has not enough power to interest the voters in the elections. Only a little over fifty per cent of the registered vote was cast in the last municipal election, despite the strenuous campaigning of the Citizens' Municipal League, one wing of the Democratic machine, and the individual candidates.

In New York the City Assembly has not been the important object of the reformers' campaigning, but the higher offices. This has been one of the causes of the spasmodic character of the work in that place. When a Mayoral election is on hand all the various units of the Fusionist Party get together, turn out reams of campaign literature, posters, election cards in a dozen different tongues, and set to work thru all their organizations trying to arouse the city to a passion of interest in trying to put the best men into office. Very often the Fusionists are successful but what a contrast this frenzied, fitful plan of work presents to the regular issuance of bulletins vigorously worded, and of reports of the records of retiring public servants and candidates for election or reelection, one of the main features of the Voters' League campaign. Steadiness marks the work in Chicago, steadiness which is in no wise akin to coldness or indifference to the result, but which on the other hand keeps public interest in public affairs intelligently aroused so that at any time by a vig-
orous campaign it can carry the city, as it does year after year.

Boston has in part copied Chicago's method, in part New York's, yet has never achieved the steady efficiency of the one, despite its reproduction of the issued record of candidates, nor the passionate if passing interest of the other. A great part of the Boston voters look at the Good Government Association and the Municipal Citizens' League with distrust, without faith in their non-partisan protestations. How to change this distrust to loyal following is a problem. The fact remains that it exists. One possible reason for Boston's lesser success, with the Chicago method, is the more moderate way in which it has been applied. Its recommendation of candidates has been without enthusiasm in most cases, its denunciation a mere statement of disapproval of their candidacy, which serves only to register the Association's judgment in the voter's mind, frequently without giving any strongly stated grounds for it. In speaking of councilmanic candidates only their records were shown and no advice given for their election or defeat, during several years. Such reserve may appeal to the more intelligent classes, but most of the voters are outside of these classes. "City Affairs" is not calculated to attract the man of the street, unless he comes to it with a fixed purpose to find out what it may contain concerning the run-
ning of his city, unless his interest is already aroused.

Chicago has the best papers strenuously supporting reform, and the press in that city is very powerful. New York's papers are with the Fusionists of whom the City Club and Citizens' Association are merely parts. But the papers most read in Boston as frequently criticize the reform organizations as support them, and give their support or opposition to candidates very largely along party lines.

To sum up the whole matter,—Chicago with a corrupt legislature and a Council possessed with real powers of government appealed to the people, kept up a continuous struggle thru alternating success and failure to ultimate victory, now long continued. The method has been the systematic and regular informing of the voters concerning the candidates, thru published reports, and dependence upon the voters not the legislature.

New York has varied success with failure, neglecting a weak Council and appealing to the State Assembly over the voter's head. The method has been mainly educative and legislative in nature, depending upon whirlwind campaigns by which to oppose and defeat Tammany thru a union of forces, which exists only until after election day.

Boston, with a weak Council, and many of her most able business men living in neighboring towns, appeals to the people and the legislature at the same time, but puts its
real trust in the legislature. Except for its Public School Association the reform organizations have had a very moderate success, resultant upon the published record of candidates for office and the pre-election campaign.

The ideal method? I believe it would be found in one organization or federated group of organizations carrying on the educational work of New York's Good Government Clubs scattered over the city; the appeal to the electorate of the Chicago Municipal Voters' League, based upon faith in the voters, rather than in the State Legislature, after informing them of the candidates for office thru the published record of their public lives; the constant watch kept over the proceedings of the council and city departments; and the non-partisan nominating organization like the Citizens' Municipal League, or the Citizens' Union of New York.